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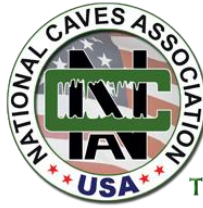
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CaveTalk

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL CAVES ASSOCIATION

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NCA Core Values
Stewardship
Education
Cooperation



January 2021



Words of Wisdom From Our President



Yes! January and a new year is finally HERE! We all look forward to 2021 with the hopes of seeing the travel industry begin to flourish again. The lessons learned in 2020 will change what we will be doing in 2021 and beyond.

There is a Bible verse on my desk from Proverbs 16:9 about knowing God's will that says: "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." I think it is helpful at the beginning of a new year for everyone to have a personal strategic meeting making plans yet realizing, like this year, that it is the Lord that directs our steps. Taking time to set priorities to do those things that are most important to us will truly bless you and your family - so let

me encourage you to put on your calendar a 3 hour block of time to be alone for a thoughtful and prayerful meeting.

Here is a quote from Jack Herschend (NCA's first President 1965-66) that rings true in my heart: "You see I believe that God really does have a great plan for each of us. He wants us to know and apply our spiritual giftedness, to build great relationships, and to work hard."

Let me encourage you to be intentional in applying your spiritual giftedness and build some great relationships this year.

In every Cave Talk I try to mention our NCA Core Values S.E.C. (Stewardship, Education & Cooperation) so we don't forget them and also we can celebrate that our cave family really excels in these areas. In last month's Cave Talk (In case you didn't read it) I mentioned two things that I want to get some more feed-back from the membership on.

One, was the thought of adding a forth core value (ENTERTAINMENT) because we are all chiefly in the entertainment business.

Two was, making clear what our organization's CORE FOCUS is, by answering these two questions:

Why does the National Caves Association exist?

What is the National Caves Association's niche?

Your participation in responding to these three things will be helpful to the Board when we meet in February to discuss this during our Mid-Year Board Meeting in Orlando this year. You can send your thoughts to me at AI@DeSotoCaverns.com THANK YOU!

In closing, let me once again just encourage you: It is time to take action and carry out the necessary changes! - Go For It, and have an awesome New Year!!!

AI Mathis

NCA President



“RESTART 2020” Changes Name to “READY TO ROCK 2021”

Many of you have sent me messages that you praised your Association for taking time, almost on a weekly basis, to keep you informed as to what is going on with our members during the COVID 19 pandemic. This also included weekly briefings from the U. S. Travel Association and other organizations.

This was new to all of us and the main reason we formed our committee and gathered almost monthly to figure out ways to help you prepare for reopening. Because of your comments, I will be encouraging those folks who served on the Committee “RESTART 2020” to continue to be on the newly named “READY TO ROCK 2021” Committee. Rod Graves, Luray Caverns, will continue to be Chairman and I will be asking a few others to join us as well. If you have a willingness to participate, please let me know as soon as possible - please and thank you!



Bob changes the calendar from 2020 to 2021 in hopes that the new year will be much brighter than the last. Get ready to rock!

I will be sending out an email to all members for some information as we begin our new year

and start sharing our weekly reports regarding Covid-19 and where each cave currently stands. I appreciate everyone helping out as we continue to support each other knowing that there is light appearing at the end of this long dark tunnel.

Bob Holt

Executive Director



Natural Bridge Caverns Makes Martha Stewart's List of Places to Celebrate Christmas While Maintaining Social Distance



Christmas at the Caverns To kick your Christmas celebrations over the top, take a trip 180 feet below ground. At [Natural Bridge Caverns](#), in San Antonio, Texas—a breathtaking limestone cave system formed by prehistoric water passages—Christmas is a major event. As part of [Christmas at the Caverns](#), a 5,000-square-foot maze to find Rudolph and a third-mile trail of holiday lights will delight kids and kids-at-heart, while a 30-foot Christmas tree forms the ideal backdrop for a family photo. Adventure seekers can level up the experience with a ride above Texas Hill Country on the Twisted Trails Zip Rails & Ropes Course, zooming over almost 700 feet of track at a dazzling 6 stories in the air. Or, soak in the unique acoustics (and blissful 70-degree temps) of the caverns with a Christmas concert orchestrated by area choirs. The

experience runs on select dates from December 5 to 23, and tickets cost \$20 per adult and \$15 per child; Twisted Trails and the Christmas concert are each an additional \$13 per person, and a portion of all proceeds is donated to the San Antonio Food Bank.



Christmas All Around the NCA



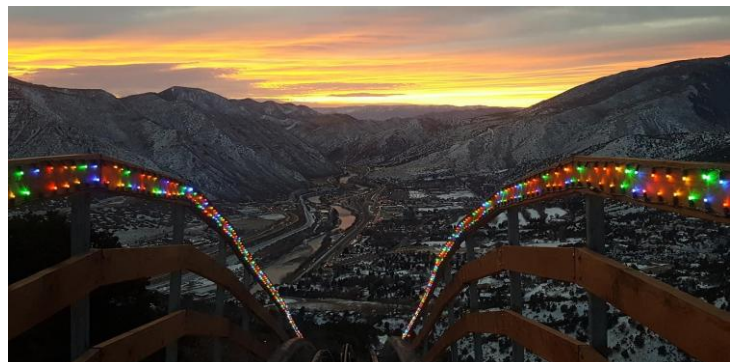
Squire Boone Caverns
Seeing a lighted cow at the end of a driveway in Maukport, IN, means you must have reached the home of Claudia Yundt and Chip Meek. Come inside... Claudia and family have made enough cookies to feed an army! No surprise if you've ever seen all the canning in her pantry!



Ohio Caverns Why not treat yourselves and your family to an experience this Holiday season! Cavern tours are available daily, and depart frequently throughout the day. Tickets can be purchased online, or in person. No reservations required!

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from all of us at Ohio Caverns! May your days be merry and bright, and may all of your wishes be filled.

Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park Enjoy Winter on the Mountain at 7,100ft. Be sure to bundle up like you are coming to ski! Hop on the Glenwood Gondola to Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park to explore caves and thrilling winter rides and attractions. Take a ride on the Alpine Coaster, grab a delicious hot drink from the Lookout Grille and watch the giant musical Christmas tree!



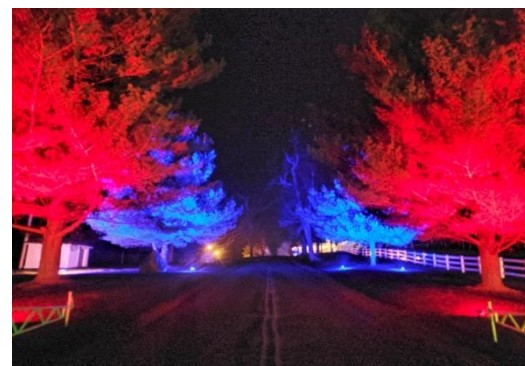


Shenandoah Caverns It's not only Christmas and the New Year... 🤖

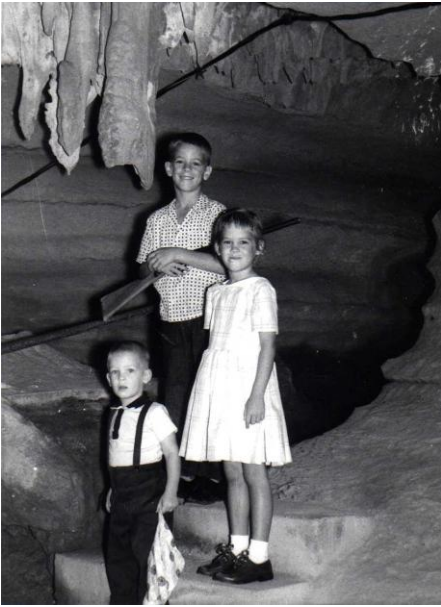
While it's been fun getting creative with specialty tours and opening for small gatherings and special events, we can't wait to plan a big count down in May to our 100th Anniversary! We have collaborated a few times in 2020 with Cave Ridge Vineyard to host Wine and Food Pairing



Many local Middle and high School students will be studying for their Virginia Standards of Learning test the first week in January. They learned many amazing things about Virginia Geology the first semester, including learning about caves and Karst Topography.



Do you want to build a snowman? Come by and see us and visit our frosty friend before he melts away!



Bluff Dwellers Cave That's Mike, Mary and Ray Bunch, children of George and Reita Bunch. Mike is the oldest and Ray the youngest. Ray and Ann Bunch run the cave now.

Besides being a cave manager, caver, active NSS and NCA member among other things, Nicole Ridlen shows us some of her baking talents. Bread and cinnamon roll which makes great French toast. Nicole says – Heaven!



The Lost Sea Adventure Did you know that Lisa McClung has a beautiful Santa collection that she has been adding to for several years?

Lincoln Caverns (Left) Everyone who joined us for SANTA IN THE CAVE! Together we raised \$500 for Huntingdon Forum of Churches Emergency Fuel Fund. Can't wait to see all the photos of the 64 families who joined us and helped make this event a huge success!



Ruby Falls pulling out Christmas ornaments are like seeing old friends and a walk down memory lane!

We created a scene fit for the head elf 🧑🏻‍🍻 himself! Climb in the sleigh to capture that perfect Christmas card photo to remember your holiday adventure.

You never need a ticket to stop in for that perfect gift in the Village Gift Shop!





Happy 90th Birthday Harrison Terk

Our friend "Terk" started working at Howe Caverns as a youngster, went on to serve his country and then returned to Howe to fulfill his career in the cave/tourism industry. He worked alongside Rodney Schaeffer as Assistant General Manager and when Rod retired Terk moved up as General Manager retiring in 1995. He served on the Board of Directors for many years until the caverns' was sold in 2007.



He has been an active member of the NCA serving on the Board of Directors and as President from 1979-1980.



Terk celebrated his 90th Birthday on December 27. We wish him and his wife Ginny many more happy and healthy years!



The Need for Normalcy: A Year with Covid-19

Santa Who Helps Out at Glenwood Caverns



Fred Andersen shows off the belt he made for his 100% handmade Santa outfit.

Chelsea Self / Post Independent

2020 is Fred Andersen's — also known as Santa Fred's — third season working as a professional Santa. The role sort of found him — not in a Tim Allen knocks real Santa off the roof kind of way, but a simple decision to grow out his beard caused a domino-style chain of events.

"I started growing my beard out, it was the first time growing my beard in about ten years and it started coming in mostly white, to my surprise. Everybody

kept commenting that I looked like Santa ... and I have round cheeks and twinkly blue eyes you know the whole bit so it makes sense that I look like Santa," Andersen said.

The blessing of an all-natural beard was his foot in the door but what kept Santa Fred coming back to the job and pursuing it further was the joy he saw in children's eyes when he would show up dressed in his suit with presents in hand.

"They're jumping up and down and happy yet no hesitation, no suspicion, no negativity at all ... and that set the hook. That is the best part that is absolutely the best part ... little kids who would normally look at a stranger and say 'ooh I don't know' — they see Santa and they want a hug," Andersen said.



Fred Andersen applies white mascara to his eyebrows during preparation for his evening as Santa.

Chelsea Self / Post Independent

Work for Santa Fred during a pandemic year is peculiar in more ways than one. Andersen considers himself lucky to be relatively young compared to other Santas and in good health since that makes the chance of catching a virus of any kind on the job unlikely to take him off the job permanently.

"I'm still relatively young and so I'm not near as worried about it as these old guys would be. I mean it would ruin the rest of my season obviously if I came down with it ... I'm still young and healthy and pretty much as strong as a horse, so I think I'd probably get through it," Andersen said.



Fred Andersen looks in a mirror to check his mustache and beard which is bleaches white every year before playing Santa.

Chelsea Self / Post Independent

Requests from kids who chat with Santa Fred are similar to what he's heard in the past, but these days there are many mentions of not wanting to wear a mask any longer or wishes for life to return back to normal.

"Biggest mention I get is the kids wish they don't have to wear the mask anymore. Like everybody else, they're so tired of the mask, they are so tired of the social distancing, they just want it to stop ... If somebody asks something that is beyond Santa's abilities, you basically just have to remind the kids that 'hey, I'm just a toymaker, there's only so much I can do,'" Andersen said.

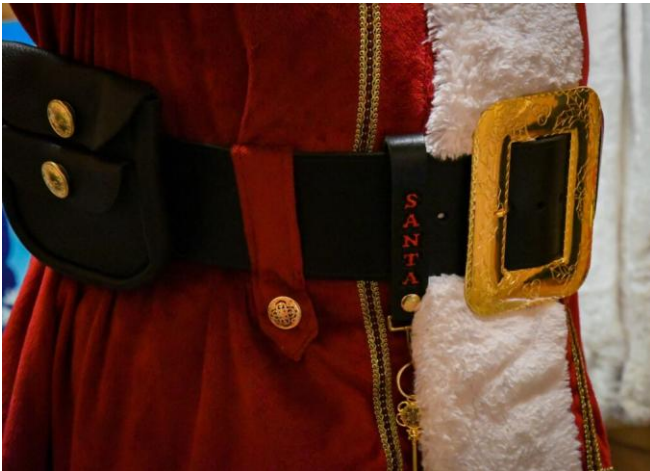


Fred Andersen slips on his boots before an evening as Santa at Winter on the Mountain at the Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park.

Chelsea Self / Post Independent

Santa Fred said this year wasn't easy for people of all ages and backgrounds. Preserving the tradition of sitting on Santa's lap is his gift to the community. Taking safety precautions like visiting outdoors and socially distanced with an immuno-compromised child or wearing a face shield over his perfectly curled beard he said are all worth it if it helps children believe.

"That's the best part it really is. I figure if I can help a kid believe in Santa for one more year, just keep that magic alive for one more year, then I did my job," Andersen said.



100% of Fred Andersen's Santa outfit was handmade and custom.

Chelsea Self / Post Independent

Andersen takes his job as Santa very seriously in an almost perfectionist approach. Santa Fred made his own suit, with experience from sewing during his time in the Navy and costume-making for a Viking age reenactment hobby. It wasn't a quick and easy process by any means, but compared to purchasing a professional custom suit which can be priced anywhere from \$1,000 to \$5,000, it made a lot more sense for him to create it himself.



Fred Andersen makes sure his hat will fit over his protective face shield before dressing up as Santa at Winter on the Mountain.

Chelsea Self / Post Independent



Fred Andersen prepares for an evening as Santa at the Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park's Winter on the Mountain.

Chelsea Self / Post Independent

When he first started his Santa gigs it would take him close to two hours to get ready, but these days he can complete the look in under an hour if he happens to be in a pinch. Santa Fred said he wanted to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season, and to remind people the importance of preserving traditions, particularly ones that spark happiness.



"I could never be a short sleeved Santa," Fred Andersen said while getting ready for an evening playing Santa at the Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park Winter on the Mountain.
Chelsea Self / Post Independent



Mila Rios smiles with pure joy and excitement upon seeing Santa at Winter on the Mountain.
Chelsea Self / Post Independent



"Well, just that it's temporary. I mean Covid will probably be out there forever but we'll get a handle on it. It will no longer be determining how we live anymore. Just don't forget tradition, don't forget the important stuff ... Years like this are when you need a Santa, you really do. You need that normalcy, you need something that's just good. Don't let it go."

Fred Andersen attempts to interact with kids while wearing a fogged up protective face shield while playing Santa at Winter on the Mountain.

jpeterson@postindependent.com



Steve Beckley Promotes Safety By Wearing Masks

Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park is happy to be a part of United to Stop the Spread. A local community of businesses determined to stay safe and open by taking public health recommendations seriously. Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park and Iron Mountain Hot Springs owner Steve Beckley said "we encourage our guests, friends, neighbors and family to do the same."

See Steve as he does his promotional video: [HERE](#)



Mammoth Cave's Bruce Powell Retires!

Bruce Powell, Deputy Superintendent of Mammoth Cave National Park, announces his retirement from the National Park Service (NPS) at the end of December 2020. Powell's federal career began in 1984 and has taken him around the country for over 36 years of dedicated public service.

"I loved the national parks well before I began my federal career," said Powell. "I was able to achieve my career goal of working in a variety of national parks and have had the opportunity to see and care for these very special places. After working at fourteen NPS locations in ten states, I have had a very satisfying career and plan to finish out this month with a smile of contentment."

Powell started his work for the park service as an Editorial Clerk in the Southeast Regional Office in Atlanta, GA and then spent his next five years working in different roles in Administration at Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, and Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. He then went to the Southwest Regional Office as a Management Analyst before serving as the Superintendent of Golden Spike National Historic Site in northern Utah for six years and earning a Superior Service Honor Award. During this part of his career, he served official details at Cumberland Island National Seashore and Chamizal National Memorial, and Powell also served as the Acting Utah State Coordinator, representing and assisting 16 national park areas in the Beehive State.

But after many career experiences and many moves, Mammoth Cave has been his primary home. Powell came to Mammoth Cave National Park in 2001, serving as its Deputy Superintendent, a position he and has filled for the last twenty years.

"Bruce has completed a lot of major projects and witnessed many changes during his time with the park service," said Barclay Trimble, Superintendent. "For the last twenty years at Mammoth Cave, he has been dependable, hardworking and his passion for his job truly shows in how much he cares for this park, its employees, and our many community partners. His institutional knowledge and dedication to the park have been amazing assets that we will definitely miss after he retires."

Powell advocated and initiated many critical projects at Mammoth Cave over the last 20 years but is most proud of his work in supporting the achievement of the park's mission for being established: to preserve the internationally famous Mammoth Cave while providing an opportunity for the public to enjoy it. He fulfilled this mission through projects focused on internal park operations, but also by actively coordinating with the park's three counties, Edmonson, Hart and Barren, as well as the local communities' organizations such as their chambers of commerce, tourism bureaus, Caveland Marketing Association, and the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Region. His work has strengthened and built upon these invaluable relationships that are critical to the success of the park and the businesses and organizations around the park.

"Nothing gives me more satisfaction than seeing park visitors get excited as they visit the park," said Powell. "I likewise get great satisfaction in helping lead and support a superb group of highly dedicated park employees while working collaboratively with so many supportive park partners and community groups that surround Mammoth Cave National Park. I am very grateful for this opportunity."

For his retirement plans, Powell looks forward to more time with his wife Barbara at their home in Bowling Green, KY, and visits with their daughter Katrina who attends school in Louisville.

A small private reception is being planned to celebrate Bruce's achievements during the summer of 2021. Well wishes or cards are being collected in advance and may be sent to Mammoth Cave National Park, Attn: Powell Retirement, PO Box 7, Mammoth Cave, KY. Emails may be sent to MACA_PIO@nps.gov.



Bruce Powell, Deputy Superintendent, Mammoth Cave National Park
NPS Photo

**The Members of the NCA wish a happy retirement to Bruce.
It has been a pleasure working with you these past 20 years!**



INTERNATIONAL SHOW CAVES ASSOCIATION

ISCA Announces Results of Covid-19 Survey

Frasassi/Genga-Italy (December 10, 2020) — While recent news has been consumed with huge layoffs at large name brand theme parks, little has been said about the scope of loss in smaller entertainment venues that rely on travel and tourism for their livelihood.

One of those industries is represented by the [International Show Caves Association](#) (ISCA). Show caves around the world protect and preserve caves and provide a place for people to learn about these special, natural, cultural, and historical resources. There are more than **1600 show cave businesses throughout the world.**

ISCA surveyed show caves worldwide and the sampling represented 1/16th of the worlds' show caves. The **first goal of the project was to establish a baseline for the significance of the show cave industry** worldwide and to educate the world on how show caves contribute to the global economy. The **second purpose was to find out to what degree the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted show caves**, employees, the economy, and our mission of preservation, conservation, and creating interest in our subterranean world. The third goal was to highlight protocols, the show cave industry implemented to keep employees and visitors healthy and safe.

Brad Wuest, President of ISCA and a co-owner, President/CEO of [Natural Bridge Caverns](#), located in [San Antonio, Texas](#) said, "Show caves play an important role in nature tourism and sustainable economic development, providing jobs, and helping the economy. We all know this to be true, but the data had never been collected to quantify the significance of the show cave industry on a worldwide basis, Wuest said. "We hope these [SURVEY RESULTS](#) will create more awareness and support for the show cave industry."

Click [here](#) to see a video of ISCA President, Brad Wuest announcing the results.

Thank You to the NCA Members Who Participated in this Important Survey!

ISCA Newsletter for January – February 2021

Click [Here](#) for the Latest Edition



Cave Sim Mugs to Support Education



I'm so excited that Peter Jones has created a beautiful collection of handcrafted mugs.

Please order now at cavesim.com/support to help us continue our educational work!

Dave Jackson
Cave Sim

Moving Forward with International Year of Caves and Karst



The UIS is working with UNESCO to schedule a celebration of the IYCK at its headquarters for later in 2021 when the pandemic recedes. In the meantime, our virtual opening will be recorded and posted on 26 January. The url has not been determined yet but I'll be announcing in via NCKRI's e-mail list as soon as it is known (if some of you are not on the NCKRI list and would like to be or want information about, just let me know). You can also follow the IYCK website (www.iyck2021.org) or on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/uisspeleo>).

George Veni, PhD

Executive Director, National Cave and Karst Research Institute (NCKRI)

and

President, International Union of Speleology (UIS)



Looking For Ideas To Celebrate IYCK 2021? Our Friends at the NPS Have Some Great Ideas!

Hello All!

I hope everyone is doing well and staying healthy! I welcome all new participants and extend a special hello to our new international friends!

The International Year of Caves and Karst (IYCK) is around the corner and Cave Week 2021 will be part of the year's celebration for the National Park Service NPS. The program has expanded to include the USFS, BLM, and international organizations. The first part of this email pertains to Cave Week while the second part concentrates on how to participate with IYCK celebrations.

Cave Week 2021

Dates

The dates for Cave Week 2021 will be **June 6th** through **June 12th**. From now on the week will include National Caves and Karst Day. This will simplify when the week occurs and make it easier for planning in the future. June 6th is National Caves and Karst Day. What a great way to kick off the week!

Theme

The National Park Service's over all theme for IYCK is "**Discover what is under your National Park**" and Cave Week will revolve around this phrase. With almost half of all NPS sites containing caves, karst, and pseudokarst this theme is very versatile. It could also be modified to "Discover what is under your feet" for all the other agencies, organizations, and groups participating on an international level. The idea is to promote caves, karst, and their importance on a local and international level.

Cave Week Expectations

Simply put, what is expected during Cave Week is the promotion of caves and karst to the public. This will be accomplished by creating posts revolving around current exploration, research, stories of discovery, life, important current and historic figures, human history, how visitors can help and be involved, as well as archaeology and paleontology, etc. One of the most important aspects of the year is to broaden people's understanding of where caves and karst are located

across the U.S. and world. I encourage the creation and sharing of posts to promote other sites to accomplish this. Use **#CaveWeek** on your post to make them searchable by the public.

Cave Week 2021 will also be tied into the IYCK regional and national art contest (More information below).

[Celebrate Cave Week! - Caves and Karst \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

International Year of Caves and Karst Information

Contributing to the IYCK Website

The IYCK team has created a website for the international year. You will find links for featured articles, themes for each month of the year, an art contest, space for partners, and much more.

[International Year of Caves and Karst 2021—NPS Celebrates! - Caves and Karst \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

The IYCK team encourages everyone to contribute articles, photos, videos, or other forms of content so it can be viewed by the public. We would like to have featured articles every month and be able to feature a park or site every month. We are able upload content from our international partners and are open to suggestions for additional content. It would be great to be able to list every organization as a partner with links for the public to follow. Jim Wood oversees the website, and he can be reached at Jim.Wood@nps.gov.

NPS Themes Calendar 2021:

To keep continuous interest throughout the year we have created monthly themes for social media posts. More information can be found on the website by following the "Year at a Glance" link. There you will find out more details for each month.

January - Exploration

February - Conservation

March - Caves and Karst

April - Speleothems

May - Paleontology

June - Jr. Rangers

July - Climate

August - Cave Critters

September - Lava tubes and other dark places

October - Bats

November - Hydrogeology

December - Archaeology

Art Contest

The international year would not be complete without the regional and national art contest. The rules for this contest are found on the website as well. The start date for the regional contest will be February 1st and the end date for submissions will be June 12th. The regional contest takes place at your park or site. Entries will be mailed to your site and then winners, for the various age categories, will be selected. Once winners have been selected, they will be scanned and emailed to Jim Wood for the national contest. The IYCK team will select the national winners and then upload them to a digital gallery for viewing in October.

One of the main goals of the international year is to get the younger generations interested in caves and karst. Therefore, the monthly theme for June is Jr. Rangers. We recommend posting about the art contest and Jr. Ranger activity books during Cave Week as well. Hopefully, these activities will inspire today's children so great changes can be made in the future regarding the protection of the valuable locations.

Please email Jim or any member of the IYCK team if your site is willing to participate in the art contest. When you do email the team, include your sites name and address as to where the entries will be mailed. The mailing information will be uploaded to the website to create a list of participating locations. This section of the website is still being updated since there are no participating parks yet.

Below is an example of the digital gallery to be used to announce the national art contest winners.

[NPGallery Search Results \(nps.gov\)](#)

Website Link

[The International Year of Caves and Karst in 2021 \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#)

International Year of Caves and Karst Team Contacts

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If you know anyone who you think would benefit or be interested this email, forward it to them. Questions about Cave Week 2021 can be directed to me and questions about the international year can be sent to anyone on the team.

Thank you!

Daniel Pawlak
Carlsbad Caverns National Park
575-236-1366



Marion Dunlavy Together Again with Her Husband Myron in the Cave They Both Loved



Mother joined Dad in Whisper Rocks on December 27. It was a beautiful time together with Riley, Bruce, Sue & John. I know they are both at peace and together forever. The connection with them in the cave is so special and comforting. This we will have forever. Thank you to my wonderful family for a great day. It was a joyous occasion! We look forward to the day when we can celebrate her life with all of our friends!

Ann Dunlavy
Lincoln Caverns



NCA Insurance Column: Winter Slip and Falls: Avoid Common Hazards

During the winter months, slips and falls are a leading cause of work injuries, and one of the most common injuries we see at Assurance.

According to the claims data:

- ❖ 25 percent of ice- and snow-related falls occur in parking lots
- ❖ 20 percent of slips and falls that occur in parking lots result in lost time from work

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018, there were 21,680 workplace slip-and-fall injuries involving ice, sleet or snow that required at least one day away from work to recuperate. This number doesn't include falls from heights or through surfaces.

Bureau of Labor Statistics data also show that there were thousands more winter slip-and-fall-related injuries that were minor and did not result in lost work time. The average winter slip-and-fall lost-time claim to be between \$40,000 and \$45,000. The costs — direct and indirect — mount quickly and can't be ignored.

It pays to start early

The good news is that slip-and-fall injuries don't have to "just happen." You, as an employer, can do a lot to prevent these injuries at your workplace, and fall is a great time to start preparing your workplace and your employees for the winter season.

Prepare your workplace

Follow these steps to prepare for winter weather both inside and outside:

- ❖ **Discuss expectations with your maintenance staff or snow removal vendor.**

Make it clear you expect snow and ice accumulation to be removed quickly and salt or other surface treatments applied to melt icy spots. Discuss which entrances should be cleared first, how often snow removal should occur, and who is responsible for what. Ensure snow is piled in a low area of the lot to prevent hazards from melting and refreeze. Develop an accountability plan with the vendor to deal with staffing problems and poor workmanship. Request that your vendor supply you with a copy of the checklist given to staff which outlines the most important aspects of the services provided.

- ❖ **Spot check for hazards.**

Identify potholes and cracks that may cause issues in inclement weather. Arrange for repairs before it snows. Check that drainpipes, grate covers and catch basins are not clogged with debris. Once the snow comes, ice dams can form, causing water from melting snow and ice to back up onto sidewalks and refreeze. Make sure lighting systems covering parking lots and sidewalks are checked regularly to verify they are working properly. Poor lighting makes it more difficult for employees to see patches of snow and ice. Check entrance steps and handrails for damage. Employees need a sturdy handrail to grip when conditions are slick. Eliminate unauthorized walkways using hazard tape or barriers to keep people from taking shortcuts across unshoveled areas.

- ❖ **Use previous injury records to set your priorities.**

Review last year's reports to determine where there has been a history of slip-and-fall incidents. Find solutions to eliminate those problem areas.



❖ **Make plans to prevent indoor slips.**

When snow is tracked indoors, interior walking surfaces in entrances, reception areas, hallways, and stairwells can be dangerous. To keep employees safe, use a floor fan to help keep walkways dry. Strategically place “wet floor” signs to slow people down as they enter the building. Use beveled floor mats to catch excess water. Keep extra mats on hand in case they become saturated with water and need to be changed.

❖ **Clean up spills or puddles immediately.**

Create a procedure for taking the appropriate action when someone causes or comes across a spill.

Protect your workplace against winter slips and falls

Winter slips and falls can easily be avoided by taking some simple precautions. Let the penguin help you raise awareness among your employees.

Tell employees to:

- ❖ Walk like a penguin by focusing on your footing and taking short, slow and flat-footed steps
- ❖ Take it slow
- ❖ Avoid using cell phones or carrying large loads while walking
- ❖ Walk on marked paths and avoid short cuts
- ❖ Wear proper footwear for the weather — no heels or smooth-soled shoes
- ❖ Watch for changing conditions — freezing, melting and refreezing are especially dangerous
- ❖ Step down and not out when getting out of a vehicle
- ❖ Step down off curbs, not out
- ❖ Report icy conditions to a supervisor or maintenance person
- ❖ Spread salt on ice



WNS Report

New Test Will Help Researchers Understand Pesticide Threats to Wild Bat Populations

From *Beyond Pesticides*, Dec. 10, 2020



A new test has been developed by a team of Mexican and Canadian scientists to help field researchers detect early warning signs of pesticide exposure in wild bat populations.

The test is referred to as a micronucleus test and is done by taking a blood sample. Instead of measuring the level of pesticide contaminating a bat’s body, it can assess the effect of pesticides and other chemical agents that damage genetic information in a cell.

Results in Mexico showed that bats roosting in caves with higher levels of agricultural production (53%) had higher levels of micronucleus detection than those found in a less disturbed site (15%). As a result, the authors conclude that the testing is likely to be an effective, inexpensive approach to bio-monitoring bat populations.

Bats are particularly sensitive to pesticides that bio-concentrate in fat; they develop large stores to use while migrating or hibernating, and high concentrations of toxic pesticides in this fat can result in significant poisoning as the body burns it off.

Patty Perlaky

WNS Chair





Calendar of Events

- **International Year of Caves & Karst 2021**
- **NCA Mid-Winter Board of Directors Meeting** Orlando, Florida, February 22-24, 2021
- **National Bat Appreciation Day**, April 17, 2021
- **National Cave and Karst Day**, June 6, 2021
- **NSS Convention 2021**, Weed, California, June 28 – July 2, 2021
- **18th International Congress of Speleology**, Lyon, France, July 23 – 29, 2021
- **NCA Convention 2020**, Host: Lake Shasta Caverns, Redding, California, September 23 – October 1, 2021
- **International Cave Lighting Workshop** Obertraun, Austria, sponsored by Cave Lighting, October 21 - 24, 2021
- **International Gift Exposition in the Smokies 2021**, Sevierville, Tennessee, (Dates TBD), & Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, (Dates TBD)
- **Smoky Mountain Gift Show 2021** Gatlinburg, Tennessee, (TBD)
- **IAAPA 2021**, Orlando, Florida, November 16 – 19, 2021
- **NCA Mid-Winter Board of Directors Meeting 2022** (Dates and Location TBD)
- **National Bat Appreciation Day**, April 17, 2022
- **NSS Convention 2022**, Custer, South Dakota, (Dates TBD)
- **NCA Convention & ISCA 9th Congress 2022**, Host: Natural Bridge Caverns, San Antonio, Texas, September 29 – October 8, 2022 (extended pre and post trips optional)
- **International Gift Exposition in the Smokies 2021**, Sevierville, Tennessee, (Dates TBD), & Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, (Dates TBD)
- **Smoky Mountain Gift Show 2022** Gatlinburg, Tennessee, (TBD)
- **IAAPA 2022**, Orlando, Florida, November 15 – 18, 2022

Got News?

Please make sure you let Bob Holt know when you have news to share with the membership regarding you and your cave. It is the goal of the NCA office to continue producing monthly issues of Cave Talk and this can only happen when you help with the sharing of your news. Please send your articles, photographs to bob@cavern.com.

February 2021 Cave Talk Deadline

Please have all articles to Bob Holt no later than January 15. Thank you!